A Geography of Resistance and Recuperation: A Global Defense of Garifuna Place

Winning Essay of the 2019 Graduate-level Michael Baptista Essay Prize

by

Kimberly Palmer

Baptista Prizewining Essay

December 2019

BAPTISTA PRIZEWINNING ESSAYS

The Baptista Prizewinning Essays include papers submitted as coursework at York University that have been nominated by instructors and selected annually by a committee of CERLAC Fellows. The selection committee does not suggest any editorial changes, and prize-winning essays may be slated for publication elsewhere. All responsibility for views and analysis lies with the author.

The Michael Baptista Essay Prize was established by the friends of Michael Baptista and the Royal Bank of Canada. This $500 Prize is awarded annually to both a graduate and an undergraduate student at York University in recognition of an outstanding scholarly essay of relevance to the area of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, from the humanities, social science, business or legal perspective.

CERLAC
8th floor, YRT
4700 Keele Street
York University Toronto, Ontario Canada M3J 1P3
Phone: (416) 736-5237
Email: cerlac@yorku.ca

A GEOGRAPHY OF RESISTANCE AND RECUPERATION: A GLOBAL DEFENSE OF GARIFUNA PLACE

Land recuperations, or occupations of collectively-owned Garifuna ancestral territory that have been illicitly privatized by community outsiders, have become a key strategy in the Garinagu's[1] organized resistance to dispossession in Honduras. In this paper, I focus on two land recuperations on the Honduran north coast: Vallecito (or *Faya* in Garifuna) in Limón and Wani Leè in the Bay of Trujillo, both of which are affiliated with the Garifuna organization OFRANEH (*Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña* or "the Fraternal Organization of Black Hondurans"). Central to this paper is an understanding of how OFRANEH negotiates what I call the "space of possibility" - a "space between races" carved by centuries of Garifuna struggles over land and representation. These struggles have resulted in the emergence of the ethnic *Garífuna* in multicultural Honduras, an officially-recognized *pueblo autóctono* ("autochthonous people") who are both Black and Indigenous (Anderson, 2007). The Garinagu's autochthonous status has proved invaluable to OFRANEH, allowing the organization to forge strategic alliances with Black, Indigenous and popular organizations across the Americas and foment the movement against Garifuna dispossession.

In the following pages, I draw upon extensive ethnographic research conducted in Honduras over 18 months between 2015-2017. In the first section, I provide readers with further details on OFRANEH's politics of representation as related to the "space of possibility." In the second

[1] Garinagu is the plural form of the singular Garifuna, and the latter is also used as an adjective – as in the Garifuna culture. While I was in Honduras, however, it was fairly common to hear "Garifunas" being used in place of Garinagu, and this is reflected by my using both Garinagu and Garifunas in this dissertation. As well, I use the italicized Spanish language form *Garífuna* to denote the Garinagu's designation as an official ethnic group in multicultural Honduras.

section, I show how OFRANEH-affiliated land defenders at the Vallecito and Wani Leè recuperations mark upon the landscape a script that both colludes with, as well as runs counter to, the logics and racial/spatial hierarchies of capitalist expansion: I argue that while conducting land recuperations in conformity with Eurocentric notions of "adequate" land use, Garifuna land defenders simultaneously convey the Garinagu's unique relationships with the land and contest dominant meanings of space/place in neoliberal Honduras. In the final section of this paper, I pay particular attention to OFRANEH-affiliated land defenders who were forcibly returned to Honduras after migrating to the U.S (referred to as *retornados* or "returnees"). Garifuna returnees, I propose, invoke historical and contemporary racial meanings born of Garifuna struggles across locations, strengthening and extending organizational alliances that bolster the fight for spatial justice.

Staying on the Land: The Case of Vallecito

In December 2015, I attended an OFRANEH-organized, three-day land defense event at Vallecito, a tract of collectively-owned Garifuna land in the vicinity of Limón in the Honduran department of Colón. I had been invited to the event by a society of OFRANEH-affiliated spiritual workers or *buyeis*: my relationship with this society had begun earlier that year, when I sought out the services of a *buyei* for treatment of a recurring bout of illness that I could not seem to shake. After visiting a number of western medical practitioners as well as an esteemed Honduran herbalist, a friend recommended that I see a famous healer who was a relative of his, and who just happened to be my neighbour in Trujillo. She and I eventually developed a friendship, and I began to spend more time with her and her protégé. One evening, while socializing on her verandah, the proposal was made that I join the society at Vallecito that December. I hadn't heard about Vallecito at the time, and I remember trying to recall if it was one of the numerous Garifuna communities that dotted the coast. I didn't think it was.

When I asked where or what Vallecito *was* exactly, not much information was shared with me in response: I was simply told that it was a place near Limón where I could witness "real" Garifuna culture and live in "the way of the ancestors" for a few days. A few weeks after that pleasant backyard chat, I began gathering together the few things I had been told would be necessary for our trip - towels, sheets, the essentials. I was assured that food would be provided, along with shared and basic accommodation. I set out of my rented apartment in Trujillo, hailed a *colectivo* ("collective" or shared) taxi outside of my apartment and headed to meet my friends in barrio San Martín, where we would wait for our OFRANEH-chartered bus to arrive.

When the bus arrived to San Martín, it was already filled with nearly 30 people from the nearby Garifuna communities of Santa Fé, San Antonio and Guadalupe. Leaving the barrio, we stopped in Cristales and Rio Negro to gather more attendees, including a pair of documentary

film-makers from Puerto Rico and Mexico. As we journeyed east along the coast towards Limón, there were numerous setbacks, including two break-downs, a replacement bus being sent from Trujillo to Bonito Oriental where we were stranded, and three nerve-racking military stop-and-searches. Military check-points excluded, the breaks were memorable and thoroughly enjoyable. During our first reprieve just outside of the village of Jericho, I stepped off the bus and began to talk to some of the other passengers taking in the cool evening breeze. It was then that I made contact with a small group of men and women from the Garifuna community of Santa Fé. Machetes strapped to their waists and rubber boots already on, they told me that they would be helping with land-clearing and farming at Vallecito.

Leaving the small town of Bonito Oriental far behind after we changed buses, we eventually threaded our way through an immense African Palm plantation outside of Limón. It was getting dark at this point, as a series of delays that had taken up most of our afternoon. A young man across the aisle from me knocked my elbow gently, lowered his voice and said in English: *This all belongs to Facussé.* I had heard that name! But I remembered it from a place far away from here – the Aguán valley. Eventually emerging from the palms, our bus was greeted by a large gathering of people, who made it clear that we were the long-awaited last contingent to arrive. When we disembarked the bus in a wide open space lit by spotlights here and there, I was introduced to people from almost every Garifuna community along the coast - each community group had arrived on an OFRANEH-chartered bus as we did, and the energy was vibrant and celebratory.

As I was a guest of the Trujillo *buyeis*, I accompanied them to sling hammocks in the *gulei* or alter room of the permanent *dabuyaba* that I soon learned is at the very heart of Vallecito. I had not brought my own hammock, and I was directed towards a few men and women who were

lined-up outside a well-lit *palapa* (a palm-thatched structure, generally without walls). It was here that we gathered foam mattresses or *colchones* and reusable plates, cups and cutlery for our three-day stay. Returning to the back-room of the temple, I passed the night soundly asleep and awoke hours later to the sounds of people starting their day. Waiting until dawn had broken to make my way to a common area where basins and modified outdoor *cabañas* provided the infrastructure for washing up, I stood in line with a bucket to access the *pilas* ("basins" holding water). While waiting my turn, several men in their 30s or early 40s approached me speaking in English, wanting to know what part of "the States" I was from. Replying that I was actually from St. Vincent in the West Indies, we ended up talking for the better part of an hour about Garifuna history and culture, only interrupted by a vacant spot at the *pila* and a chance for me to wash up.

After spending the morning with the *buyei* society in the temple and in the recuperation's central meeting area, I saw my sink-side companions from earlier that day. I approached them and we got to finishing our conversation, during which I asked for their interpretations of Vallecito. Eager to share with me their perspectives and reasons for attending the event, one man pronounced that Vallecito was a "Garifuna promise land" that he was helping to nurture and grow. Both of my acquaintances had spent most of their lives in the U.S, and described the recuperation as a place to connect with Garifuna culture on the land: "We are going to have it real traditional here – the one place in Honduras where you won't be able to find any Coca-Cola!" At this point his friend, who had also lived most of his life in the U.S, interjected and described how he here learned land-based skills that connected him with his ancestors, while allowing him to contribute to the formation of the "promise land." Like the group of farmers on the bus with me, he was also lending a hand – but with some electrical wiring and the

construction of some new buildings closer to the beach – "the type of work I used to do in the states." Neither of them lived out on the land at Vallecito – yet. For now, they came occasionally for OFRANEH-sponsored events like these, contributing to the development of the site, hoping to call it home eventually.

Later that afternoon, several *microbuses* arrived to the recuperation. People started to gather around them, and word spread that Berta Cáceres and COPINH (*Consejo Civico de Organizaciones Populares y Indigenas de Honduras* or "the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras") had finally arrived. Cáceres was a famed Lenca activist and world-renowned environmental activist, and I knew of her close friendship with OFRANEH's General Coordinator Miriam Miranda: COPINH has been a long-standing ally of OFRANEH's, and played a critical role in the Garinagu organizing as an autochthonous group (Jung, 2011). After their arrival but well before we lined up for our dinners outside the communal kitchen, a Lenca ceremony was held, fireworks bursting into the sky. Afterwards, a Lenca alter was constructed in the *dabuyaba* after which we shared our meals and readied ourselves for sleep. My Trujillo companions told me that the following day would be an important one, but did not share many details beyond that I would be participating in ritual. On that third day, when I made my way out of the temple at dawn, there was a palpable buzz of preparation: what was being organized was a modified *dügü* (appeasing of the ancestors) and *chugu* (feasting of the ancestors) that would form the core of our days at Vallecito.

As the sun began to rise overhead mid-morning, the energy in the central area kept building - the air was practically crackling. Those working in the communal kitchen were busy preparing vast quantities of food, and people were eventually summoned from across the central area and into the temple. The *dügü* proceeded with drumming and singing of ancestral songs, and

we were soon joined by Garifuna ancestors who arrived from St. Vincent through the temple's eastern door. About an hour into the ritual, a young man from Cristales and Rio Negro's Land Defense Committee suddenly entered the temple – he was the nephew of a friend of mine in Trujillo, and had recently survived an assassination attempt linked to his role in the land defense movement there. Hit with numerous bullets about his body, he had gone into hiding when released from the hospital. This was his first revelation, and perhaps accounted for some of the secrecy of what the event - and the ritual in particular - would entail. Deeply moving was the arrival of Joseph Chatoyer from St. Vincent just after the land defender's appearance: one land defender from *Yurumein* (the Garifuna name for St. Vincent) talking through time and space to another in Honduras, thanking and praising him for his work, and encouraging all Garinagu to stay strong in the land struggle as their ancestors had done before them.

Figure 1 Vallecito/Faya: OFRANEH-Affiliated Land Defenders "Stay On The Land" And Resist Dispossession

Dispossession and the Returned – Forcibly Returned Garifuna Migrants and the Garifuna Land Struggle

A few months after I returned from the OFRANEH Vallecito event, Berta Cáceres was murdered in her home in the western Honduras department of Intibucá. This was a state-sanctioned assassination, related to her and COPINH's relentless activism to halt a hydroelectric dam from being built on the Rio Guacarque in Lenca territory. During the march that took over the streets of Cáceres' hometown of La Esperanza after her death, Miriam Miranda was filmed on a street corner speaking to a mostly Garifuna crowd. What stayed with me the most was the way in which Miranda implored the youth to stay in the struggle: please, she cried - don't give the "mafiosas" the pleasure of seeing us go. "Stay on the land!"

Over the next few pages, I draw on the description my time at Vallecito and attend to *how* land recuperations like Vallecito are kept ongoing in effort to resist contemporary Garifuna dispossession – how do people stay on the land, and what does this have to do with race, space and place? Land defenders, I propose, cultivate land in accordance to dominant notions of land use, but still manage to upend dominant discourse and policy by using cultivation of traditional crops to perform relationships to place. This in turn re-confirms the Garinagu's autochthony and access to the discourse of Indigeneity.

As should be apparent from the previous section of this paper, many of the land defenders who I met at Vallecito were Garifuna "*retornados*" ("the returned") – usually male and in their 30s or 40s, they were "deportees" returned from the U.S. over the past two decades. The particularities of my positionality certainly gave me an insight into this phenomenon, which I had been largely unaware of before attending the Vallecito event: I had been aware of the crisis

of emigration from Honduras, since it was a daily topic of conversation throughout my time in the field. I was frequently asked by Hondurans of all backgrounds for my interpretations of life in the U.S. (again, being taken for an American at first glance), in anticipation of their migration there. These exchanges about trying to make it "north" were accompanied by comments about crushing violence and poverty that left many ordinary Hondurans with little options but to leave. And while Garifuna and non-Garifuna scholars have written extensively about the gendered dynamics of Garifuna migration during the decline of the banana enclave - noting that it was mostly men who migrated for work (whether temporarily or more permanently) in the mid-20th century – there is little scholarly work available on the gendered dynamics of more recent waves of largely-undocumented migration, nor on the effects of the legal changes requisitioned by President Clinton in 1996 on rural communities in Central America including those of the Garinagu.

The Santa Feño *retornados* who I spoke to on the bus – who I later learned had spearheaded a land recuperation in the Bay of Trujillo called Wani Leè - had attempted to return to the U.S. cities they had been deported from at least once, usually in effort to be reunited with their partners and children who had not been deported to Honduras with them (Interviews with Wani Leè 4 & 5 April 18th, 2018): informants told me that they rather risk the arduous journey through Guatemala and Mexico by foot and "*la bestia"* ("the beast,") a common term for the network of trains that Central American migrants hitch rides on in their journey through Mexico to the U.S. border) than suggest that their families give up their lives in the U.S and encounter difficulty in Honduras. After being forcibly returned a second time, the returnees I spoke with became resigned to the fact that staying in Honduras was the "only option" (Interview with Wani Leè 5 April 18th, 2018). Across the recuperations I visited, *retornados* cited their joining of the

land defense movement as a response to increasingly-limited employment opportunities, land and mobility. The return of Garifuna migrants to Honduras today coincides with a perceived increase in Garifuna migration northwards that was also the topic of everyday conversation in the field. In talks with friends, neighbours and informants across the north coast, dispossession and a lack of employment were frequently cited as reasons for emigration. But the returnees active in the land defense movement in Honduras had largely migrated as children or teenagers, but had not become citizens of the U.S. They were both charged crimes that had led to their eventual deportation to the country of their birth.

At Vallecito and Wani Leè, Garifunas must "stay on the land," lest it be taken up as abandoned, invaded and incorporated into the market as it has been in the past. For land defenders, cultivation becomes as much a means of performing land-use in line with dominant spatial imaginaries as it does a way to survive on the land: these global defenses of place, these Garifuna "place-making" projects, perform land use in accordance with dominant norms and allow land defenders to eventually become self-sufficient. As was made apparent by various conversations I had with OFRANEH-affiliates on the bus to Vallecito, and by the comments of a number of land defenders who I met that December 2015, Vallecito was very much imagined by those in the movement as a place of "authentic" or ancestral culture that was deeply intertwined with the land and Garifuna relationships with it. Vallecito was a Garifuna "promise land," a place where cultivation – particularly the cultivation of traditional Garifuna crops and medicines - also becomes critical to establishing and entrenching Garifuna cultural dependence on place and thus, their place in the discourse of Indigeneity.

Figure 2 Garifuna Women Participate In Lenca Ceremony At The Berta Vive March In April 2016, Much As They Did During The December Event At Vallecito.

Figure 3 A House And Garifuna Crops And Medicines At The Wani Leè Land Recuperation.

"Retornados" and "Garifuna Futures:" Transnational Circuits of Meaning and Knowledge in Place

What emerges from an analysis of the role of deportees in the Garifuna land defense movement is the creative way in which OFRANEH is negotiating a critical conjuncture in the current neoliberal moment: In Honduras we find a crisis born of both Honduras' particular geopolitical position and the racial hierarchies that structure capitalist expansion along colonial lines, and which rely upon a logics of white supremacy/anti-Blackness. Garifuna migrants to the U.S. arrive as racialized immigrants, mostly living and working in marginalized inner-city areas and in low-wage jobs (England, 2000). Facing racist exclusion in the U.S., Garifuna men described being criminalized by the police and facing systemic injustice in the same ways experienced by other groups racialized as Black. This, together with increasingly draconian immigration laws, has resulted in a relatively large number of Garifuna men being returned to Honduras, to what are often small, rural villages. After years (perhaps a near lifetime) in cities abroad, some of these men are all but denied entry into Honduran society, and there existed no formal re-integration programs or similar infrastructure in any of the communities I visited or conducted research in. What happens then, is we find a population of young-to-middle aged men who are facing high level of discrimination and unemployment, and who find it hard to find spaces and places within which to exist. But, by becoming involved in the land defense movement, these returnees prove critical to projects of "staying on the land" that challenge dispossession, while also making place in such a way as to re-affirm the Garinagu's ethnic autochthony and Black Indigeneity.

Retornados who have been mobilized by OFRANEH in the land defense movement provide critical numbers and skillsets to the recuperation sites, "staying on the land" and meeting

personal and community needs for land. But, are there other possibilities that their return and their involvement in these global defenses of place engender? I posed this question to one land activist involved with Vallecito, asking about his perception of deportees' role in the Garifuna land defense movement affiliated with OFRANEH. He responded by immediately asking if I had become familiar with a certain "problem" in the Garifuna communities of Sambo Creek and Corozal, which are located just to the east of La Ceiba. What he was referring to, he elaborated, was the increasing poverty obscured by the very visible and large concrete houses that peppered certain barrios of both communities. These were houses largely built with remittance money over the past several decades. And, while these homes still conveyed a sense of success and upward mobility by way of migration and re-distribution of resources to kin in Honduras, their occupants were increasingly struggling to make ends meet. What was most troubling, he said, was the food insecurity that was being suffered in many communities across the coast, even ones that, to the casual observer, had some visual markers of prosperity.

In this interviewee's opinion, food insecurity in Garifuna villages in Honduras was largely an effect of declining remittances – many of those who used to send money back home, were now back home themselves. As this crisis of reduced flows of resources deepened, so did the crisis of flows and containments of racialized bodies in space, as the dispossession of the Garinagu from the north coast coalesced with an increasing influx of deportees. The combined effects of dramatically diminished residential and subsistence lands, sparse local employment opportunities, an increasing dependence on store-bought food and higher costs of living, meant that while Garifunas leave Honduras in record numbers, deportees are returning to communities struggling with material survival in a way that they have never before (Interview with Vallecito 3 February 17th, 2018). When mobilized into the land defense movement, however, these men

became critical to the cause, not just "staying on the land" but cultivating it as well. As I earlier suggested, cultivation becomes a way to "use" land in line with dominant spatial imaginaries, but it also becomes a very real means of material survival – for those at the recuperation, as well as for communities across the coast.

Another *compañero* I conducted an interview with, was a child of Garifuna immigrants to the U.S. who still lives in New York City. Now in his mid-40s, he makes occasional trips to his natal village in the Bay of Trujillo, and forms part of a group of Garifunas in NYC who are vocal in their support of the OFRANEH land defense movement in Honduras. He dreams of retiring at Vallecito, that Garifuna promise land: "I already found my spot, right there by the beach" he told me via Skype after his last visit to the recuperation. While not a returnee himself, he viewed his role as a Garifuna *Merigana* ("American") as being somewhat related to those that had been forced to return to Honduras. What Garifunas in the diaspora could offer – as could returnees - was the wisdom gained from years of living and working in the urban sectors of the U.S. The biggest lesson he had learned in all those years away from "home" was "to value our land." While living in a 'concrete jungle' in the Global North, he said, having a land base, having one's own place to cultivate food and live in beautiful natural and tropical surroundings, had become increasingly of value to him. It sometimes astonished him, he said, that he already had what everyone seemed to be working towards: access to a plot of green with a gorgeous vista of the Caribbean. To understand that this was under threat was understandably upsetting and had prompted his interest in land defense.

For both of these participants, Vallecito and Wani Leè provided hopeful solutions for the urgent situation that the Honduran Garinagu face today. Unprecedented levels of poverty in Garifuna communities called for innovative solutions: both interviewees, as well as several other

returnee men I casually spoke to at the recuperations, proposed that reclaiming and working the land could lead to an eventual coastal network, where food-producing recuperations provide food to communities struggling with land issues and food security across Garifuna territory. And, recuperations like Vallecito – with its vast acreage - could produce food for Garifuna communities inside of Honduras, but also those in the Global North: the second participant voiced his desire to see Garifuna agricultural production become a transnational enterprise, with exports of typical and traditional Garifuna crops and ingredients directed towards Garifunas like himself, in the diaspora. For him as well as the first informant, recuperations could thus turn into "Garifuna development zones" (Interview with Vallecito 3 April 11th, 2018) that promoted community businesses that created employment opportunities for Garifunas at home and abroad (Interview with Vallecito 2 January 10th, 2018). In turn, this could provide capital for investments in a diverse set of ventures, including but not limited to agriculture and which would facilitate Garifuna cultural and material survival (Interview with Vallecito 3 April 11th, 2018).

While speaking to an OFRANEH member active in *la oficina*, the topic of returnees, remittance and farming was broached. What was "the office" view of the returnees in the land defense movement? For this informant, returnees played a tremendous role in stymying further migration, and not just through the work they did in recuperating tracts of appropriated land. He also raised the topic of dispossession, limited jobs and perceived reductions in the *remesa* ("remittance"). For this interviewee, these were the dire short-term implications of the constant return of Garifuna migrants, and the marginalization that many who remained in the states faced as racialized immigrants who were increasingly undocumented. But he quickly turned to a critique of remittance culture and its effects on the wider Garifuna community over the long-term: Perhaps the returnees offered possibility instead?

Echoing the comments of many I met in the field, he continued on to say that Garifunas often left for the north as a result of displacement and limited employment opportunities on the Honduran coast. But, he went on to decry the dependence on remittance that has only hastened the decline in Honduran Garifuna youth's interest in traditional farming and fishing methods. Farming and fishing were still largely as "backwards" and as shameful undertakings by the younger generations, and as a result, many youths did not value the ancestral lands that remained: They dreamed still of going to the U.S. and making a better life for themselves. When they witnessed *Merigana* ("American" in Garifuna) Garifunas in the land defense movement, rekindling traditional relationships to the land and sea, youth often shed the stigma associated with farming and fishing and placed importance on the land and the land struggle. *Retornados*, he proffered, also offered honest testimonials about how hard life was in the U.S. – they ruptured the dangerous and pervasive mythology of the American dream. This, he thought, represented a positive contribution made by the *retornados* to the land struggle that was often overlooked. In his closing remarks, this participant voiced what I had heard in conversations with Wani Leè recuperation members and Garifuna diaspora members active in the land defense movement themselves – that farming provided a myriad of options for Garifuna youth, including the possibility of self-employment - growing and selling produce in the local and global markets, and to members of the Garifuna diaspora who remained in the US (Interview with OFRANEH 1 April 15th, 2018).

Narratives of Displacement, Pain and Entangled Roots/Routes: Retornados, Ladinos and the Space of Possibility

Visiting Wani Leè after my time at Vallecito sharpened my focus on returnees' role in land defense, deepening my understanding of how returning Garifunas influenced the movement and

transformed land recuperations into places of possibility within a broader, transnational context of racialized dispossession and displacement. But, visiting Wani Leè after establishing contact with the recuperation leader and various members while out at Vallecito also allowed me to understand the pivotal role that Vallecito played in the wider movement, especially as a site of education and exchange. Returnees at various recuperations across the coast made their way to Vallecito not only to contribute to the clearing, working and farming of the land – and thus to twinned-performances of dominant forms of land use and cultural dependence on the land – they also learned land-based skills from Garifunas living in rural communities who also visited the site also, and were thus able to take these skills back to recuperations that they themselves founded.

But spending time at Wani Leè was also a pivotal moment in my research journey because it was this recuperation where I encountered a significant number of ladino land defenders alongside returnees. Scholars before me have written about the inclusion of long-term ladino residents of Garifuna communities in community initiatives and land recuperations in Sambo Creek for example (see Brondo, 2013), but I want to specifically put this phenomenon in conversation with work on the "transnationalization" of racial meanings as related to the Garifuna political mobilizations (see Anderson, 1997, 2009; England, 2000, 2010) and the forced return of Garifuna migrants to Honduras. The transnationalization of racial meanings is evident in their impact on localities – in a borough in New York City or in Limón, for instance (England, 2000) – whether bodies are returned from the diaspora or not. But, when Garifuna migrants *are* returned to Honduras, and become involved in these "global defenses of place" (Escobar, 2003), does anything change? What happens when the space of possibility is negotiated "in place" by returned Garinagu at land recuperation sites, and what – if anything - does it allow for?

In this section of the paper, I approach Garifuna-ladino coalitions at Wani Leè as a move towards an un-making of the social hierarchies central to capital, by way of an up-ending and re-mixing of racialized spatial imaginaries and practices informed by white supremacy and anti-Blackness. This takes a particular form at the recuperation, which references and reworks the structural conditions that have seen ladino peasants imbued with national subjecthood informed by white supremacy, and (dis)placed in projects of accumulation by (racialized) dispossession (Harvey, 2005) over the past century-and-a-half in Honduras. What I found most interesting at Wani Leè, was the way in which landless and materially poor ladinos enacted a recuperation of Garinagu land in ways that seemed to re-establish dominant geographic imaginaries and practices, but which radically challenged them at the same time. As I go on to show, this has much to do with the way that ladino recuperation members "place make" themselves, in Santa Fé as well as at the recuperation.

Important to a nuanced interpretation of my research findings is the scholarship of Sarah England (2000, 2010), who writes the Garinagu's already-complex cultural identity becomes even more so with their sometimes-positioning as Afro-Latinos in New York City: Flows of ideas and information through diasporic space - especially those related to land reclamation efforts and the "conscientization" of the Honduran Garinagu youth witnessed by my interviews with OFRANEH affiliates and land defenders – are related to racial meanings across socio-political and economic contexts. Drawing on these observations, I propose that the move "from ladino to Latino" and from "Garifuna to Black" *but also to* "Afro-Latino" in the Global North might provide the foundations for the forging of Garinagu-ladino solidarities at Wani Leè: this becomes further cemented by struggles in and over place in north coast Honduras – with place becoming, as Martin (2003) reminds us, literal grounds for coalition building across difference.

What are some Garifuna experiences in the diaspora, particularly in New York City, that might foster solidarity between Garifunas and ladinos in the recuperation movement in Honduras? While I did not conduct ethnographic research in New York City, and cannot speak to nor analyze the interpretations of Garifuna community members there in any great detail, I can use academic writing on racial formation in U.S society as a starting point to think through the ways in which racial meanings travel through time and space and impact social movements focussed on "taking places" (Lipstiz, 2011). Garifuna social movements in Honduras might reference the Civil Rights struggles of the mid-20th century as anthropologists have long suggested (Gonzalez, 1969, 1988) – but they might also reference Honduran Garifuna experiences as racialized, Spanish-speaking immigrants in particular urban spaces in the Global North. Returning to Honduras from boroughs such as the Bronx (where there is a significant Garifuna population) and becoming involved in the recuperation of ancestral land, Garifuna returnees at Wani Leè referenced their experiences abroad and their struggles in the 'concrete jungle' alongside other working class, racialized immigrant groups. On the ground at Wani Leè, ladinos were described by Garifuna returnees as potential allies in struggles over place – perhaps vis-à-vis a "transnationalization" of racial meaning (England, 2000) as I have suggested– and construed as *compañeros* ("companions," a common way to address peers and friends engaged in social movements in Honduras) suffering from racial and spatial injustice in an increasingly disparate Honduras.

In one telling example, an interviewee described his ladino recuperation *compañeros* as "Latins" instead of as "ladinos," "indios" or *chumagünu* as is far more common on the north coast. In the following excerpt, "Latins" are grouped together with "tribal" peoples (which I interpret as a reference to Indigeneity via the language of ILO Convention 169):

"Here in Honduras we have a thing - that one person, that one person, who's not from Honduras, owns half of Honduras. How is that fair? How come we still have Latin people, people from other tribes, from other races, suffering for land? We have people living in the road in Honduras. In fucking boxes and shit like that … It's not fair! Where's the Government? And we have people here who own 50 000 acres of land, 30 000 acres of land! How come?" (Interview with Wani Leè 1 April 24th, 2016).

Interpolating ladinos as a marginalized and impoverished group who hold commonality with other "tribal" groups signals to a potentially significant troubling of the hierarchies of race and space that structure and guarantee capitalist expansion in Honduras. Indeed, what is particularly prominent in the excerpt above is the way in which "Latin" and "tribal" groups (as well as those "from other races") are rhetorically brought together by a reference to a mutual "suffering for land," and as related to land concentration in the hands of the elite. This begins to challenge the complex ways in which white supremacy and the "white spatial imaginary" (Lipsitz, 2011) work in Honduras, where class divides among the non-ethnic, unmarked majority are bridged by the "whitening" legacies of *mestizaje* via the destruction of Black and Indigenous place for capitalist accumulation.

Hinting at how *blanquiamiento* structures Garifuna land loss in contemporary Honduras, the informant went on to specifically decry the ways in which immigrants from Europe and the Middle East become "naturalized quickly" as "Hondurans." This, I propose, refers to a citizenship rooted in white supremacy and concurrent spatial imaginaries and practices inherent to capitalist expansion; citizenship that the Garifuna have been denied for over two centuries despite their presence in Honduras prior to the formation of the Republic, and their noted participation in the Independence struggles. In turn, it is this racialized citizenship – this

belonging in the imagined geographies and communities of nation - that also determines land rights in the context of the neoliberal nation state:

"It's racism - it has a lot to do with that. We have people that are not Garifuna, that are Europeans, or are from the Middle East, living in Honduras, that have Honduran identity and more privilege than the Garifuna people who were here before Honduras was Honduras" (Interview with Wani Leè 1 April 24th, 2016).

In speaking to the ways white supremacy structures belonging and various forms of "privilege" this recuperation member draws our attention to the racial and spatial hierarchies that inform belonging, land rights and material conditions in Honduras. Lived experiences in particular spaces in the Global North - which I have argued premises solidarity with the disenfranchised, and racialized "Latins" who *suffer* the same fate as the Garifuna and "other tribes" – are then brought back to Honduras via forced return or deportation, and cemented in struggles over place that are described as emanating from land concentration in the hands of ultra-wealthy middle eastern and European "foreigners." At the same time as these new "agro-oligarchs" (Kerssen, 2013) are described as foreigners, it is tacitly acknowledged that it is they who are given Honduran "identity" at the expense of groups such as the Garinagu and the poor "Latins." In this reading, impoverished, racialized and "tribal" groups all find similarity in their "suffering for land" and as such, struggle together at the recuperation. Indeed, the narrative of "suffering for land" was so prominent as to have informed an interpretation of the meaning of *Garífuna* by the recuperation leader, as seen here:

Respondent: This is … I am going to put it like this … the meaning of Garifuna is … "ripe pain."

Interviewer: What do you mean?

R: *Dolor Maduro*! (“Ripe Pain”)

I: Really!

R: Of course! Gari – Funa.

I: Ok, well …

R: Well … that means is that our pain is just the beginning. So we knew that this (displacement) was going to happen.

I: So like that’s part of the …

R: GARI means Gari, dolor, it means pain. FUNA, ripe! Yeah! So … Our pain is ripe. Just the name … of our tribe.

I: Speaks to difficulty.

R: It speaks for itself. It speaks for itself.

This narrative, this meaning of the word “Garifuna” as constructed and interpreted by the interviewee, was one that gained ground in the land defense movement in Santa Fé: while I had certainly never heard this in any other community or in ‘official’ histories and translations of the name Garifuna (which is typically described as meaning “cassava eating people”), I heard this repeated by members of Wani Leè when I first spent several days out at the recuperation, when I passed time with members in Trujillo when they came into town for various reasons, as well as when I returned to the recuperation in mid-2018. What does the popularity and durability of this narrative of pain or sufferation – that has long been planted, growing, now *ripening* - signify when thinking through Garinagu struggle over hierarchical and co-constitutive formations of

racial and spatial meaning in the context of land struggles? Perhaps one way to approach this question is to build upon scholarship that accounts for the transnationalization of racial meanings brought about by Garifuna emigration to the U.S. (which I have started to flesh out above), while also accounting for other exchanges and borrowings across space and through time – to a navigation of the space of possibility in place.

Besides forging coalitions across racial and ethnic difference by ways of struggles against displacement and dispossession – struggles rooted in the "ripe pain" of "suffering for land" - that I note above, Garifuna recuperation members expressed their similarity *to* – as opposed to difference *from* – ladino recuperation members by way of a narrative of mixed-ness. This finding augments Sarah England's (2010) important argument that historical narratives of *mestizaje* continue to exist alongside multicultural discourse in Honduras: while Garifuna organizations such as OFRANEH and ODECO represent the Garifuna as a racially "pure" group to fit within the framework of ethnic autochthony, there are still moments when the Garinagu's 'mixed' heritage becomes politically salient. While these moments are maybe not forged or seized by the two organizations this dissertation focusses on, those on the ground or "in the field" in the land recuperation movement constructed their 'Garifuna-ness' in ways that weave together notions of racial singularity, plurality and fluidity; and which harken back to Garifuna land struggles and land claims in the Bay of Trujillo in the era of *mestizaje*. What is important to take away from this, I suggest, is that recuperation members negotiate and traverse this space of possibility to make room for points of commonality beyond racialized spatial injustice/ "sufferation," and which facilitate solidarity with landless and impoverished ladinos on the coast.

For instance, and as I earlier alluded to, the recuperation leader stressed the Garinagu's ethnic autochthony (as *Garífunas*) over the course of our interview, consistently deploying the

language of ILO Convention 169, using the term "tribe" and "tribal" while speaking to racial and spatial injustice in Honduras. Garifuna autochthony in Honduras – which provides access to the discourse of Indigeneity that has proved instrumental to the work of OFRANEH's *la oficina* – has been an achievement of Garinagu organizing that makes room for both Blackness and Indigeneity (Anderson, 2007), and allows for significant mobility between, within and across colonial categories of race. This is the current manifestation of ongoing and overlapping struggles over places that have – in early to mid-1900s Honduras – pivoted on representations of the Garinagu as "mixed" peoples in line with dominant discourse: While at once representing the Garinagu as a "tribe" in fitting with contemporary multicultural discourse, the land defender in question recalled the complex bricolage of native Blackness crystalized in the term *Moreno,* while also referencing African heritage that signals to the "racial singularity" that England (2010) says is a hallmark of Garifuna belonging in the ethnic rubric. In the interview extract below, Blackness is conflated with Afro-descendency, but distanced from its "foreign" connotations by a referral to Indigenous heritage. Further, this Indigeneity has roots in Honduras – the Garinagu's Arawakan heritage is referred to, but by way of their ties to the Mesoamerican Maya and Lenca. Finally, this mixed-ness is infused with a reference to Spanish heritage, a heritage privileged in dominant notions of Indo-Hispanic *mestizaje* but which is also the language of commonality and communication between Garifunas and ladinos / "Latins:"

"We are Africans, *Afrodescendientes* BUT … there's a difference, because we were mixed. Right? Being that were mixed … with the Indians that were here, with the Mayas, and the Lencas, we came *Arawako*, which is the two mixtures … of Black and Spanish and Indian … and that's what makes a Garifuna … you know?" (Interview with Wani Leè 1 April 24th, 2016.)

A Place of Possibility: Ladino (Dis)placement, the Rejection of Blanquiamiento and Cross-Cutting Alliances at Wani Leè

I now turn to two interviews conducted with ladina recuperation members at Wani Leè, in effort to consider how non-Garifuna recuperation members represent themselves in relation to dominant discourses around race and belonging in Honduras, and to try to tease out further what this might mean in terms of Garinagu and ladino solidarity and belonging at the recuperation. While I have so far argued that Garifuna-returnee recuperation members navigate the space of possibility and OFRANEH's specific routings of that to forge coalitions with landless ladinos and fortify the land defense movement in practice on the ground, I now propose that ladino recuperation members make place themselves – both in the Santa Fé Garifuna community on north coast Honduras, and at the Wani Leè land recuperation specifically – by way of picking way at established discourses of *mestizaje* informed by *blanquiamiento*. During the conversations I had with these two respondents, I was privileged to hear their life histories, both of which attended to the decision-making processes involved in their participation in the recuperation, as well as the particular series of events that brought them to this region of the north coast. These women articulated a desperate search for home and for land, after being forced to leave where they had been born and spent their early years – the first as a result of violence and the murder of a family member, and the second being brought to the region by her parents as a young child.

My research findings augment and complicate those of Keri Brondo (2010, 2013), who writes about "indios[2]" invoking narratives of mixed-ness and belonging in Sambo Creek in effort

[2] *Indio* is a term frequently used by Honduran Garifunas to describe poor *ladinos* when speaking in Spanish. Middle-class or wealthy *ladinos*, in contrast, are often referred to as *blancos*. From what I

to *contest* a growing number of Garifuna land recuperations in that community. From her perspective, Brondo (2013) reads ladino invocations of Indo-Hispanic *mestizaje* as attempts to challenge Garifuna rights to north coast land, making their own claims to place in ways that reinforce hierarchies of belonging and exclusion premised on a negation or Othering of Blackness (Brondo, 2013, p.15). But I heard quite a different story in Santa Fé and at Wani Leè, where ladina community members were active and valued members of the recuperation, and devised claims to the land in ways that highlighted their similarity to the Garinagu, bolstering Garifuna claims to belonging and land in Honduras by way of up-ending established racial discourse in effort to undo the racial and spatial hierarchies that capital depends upon. As we shall see, this was primarily couched in language that referenced mutual experiences of violent displacement and material poverty or "suffering for land," and which necessarily troubled dominant narrative of *mestizaje* or mixed-ness informed by *blanquiamiento.*

But, as I also turn to at the end of this section, there are land defenders and OFRANEH affiliates who maintain that ladino and Garifuna coalitions at recuperations will never be able to fortify Garifuna land defense, tied to a belief that ladinos might be unable to shed their dominant spatial imaginaries and practices. These experiences in "the field" with ladino "invasions" and consequences of forging solidarities with them, complicates the position of "the office" – on an organizational level, OFRANEH works closely with popular and peasant groups, but the daily lived experiences and practices of land defenders on the ground in racialized geographies of exclusion meant that many of them spoke to me about internally displaced ladinos (*campesinos*

---

understood in the field, "indio" is a pejorative term to "remind" *ladinos* that they too have indigenous roots – to "dress down *ladino* claims to superiority" (Mollett, 2013, p.1235). Alternatively, Brondo (2013) suggests that *ladinos* use the designation *indio* to highlight their land rights vis-à-vis mestizo citizenry. When speaking in Garifuna, ladinos of all class backgrounds are designated *chumagünu* which roughly translates into "outsider."

or not) as being a problem of serious proportions, that could not be solved by simply joining forces - addressing deeper issues of how white supremacy works in Honduras needed to come first.

The first of the two women whose interviews I now turn to started her exchange with me by introducing herself and her town of origin – El Paraíso in Danlí department in southeastern Honduras - then immediately proclaiming her love for Santa Fé. She laughingly pointing to her *ojos sarcos* (light-coloured eyes), saying that she had some European heritage – Spanish and Italian to be exact. While it was not uncommon for me to hear comments on light eyes and hair and their relation to European heritage and Eurocentric standards of beauty while in Honduras, this informant used her "European" features to talk about her how her "*chele*[3]" looks belied her *sangre negra* or *sangre Garifuna* ("Black blood" later specified as Garifuna blood). This I interpreted as a bid for belonging to place couched in a history of racial space in Honduras, as overlaid with interpolations of the politically Indigenous Garinagu as racially Black. This is a narrative of mixed-ness or *mestizaje* that vizibilized rather than invizibilized Blackness, but which tied that to place and belonging-in-place by way of referencing historical tropes of the north coast being a Black place outside of nation: in the excerpt below, the informant discusses her European phenotype as related to European heritage and another time and region in Honduras – interspliced with a comment about not having family on the coast – but then begins to talk about a Black/Garifuna ancestor:

"I love Santa Fé, I love it so much. Very much. But I don't have family here, like I told you. I'm mixed, I am Spanish and Italian. My grandfather was Spanish, and my grandmother was Italian.

[3] A colloquialism used to describe a person with light skin, light eyes or light hair, or any combination of features generally considered European or "white."

That was back when people like that came to Honduras. But I have also, Garifuna blood. My maternal grandmother, she was mixed. She had Black blood … Garifuna blood. But we didn't come out Black, we look white because of that other blood they gave us." (Interview with Wani Leè 3 April 24th, 2016).

Speaking about her Black and Garifuna ancestry was also used as a segue into a discussion of how much the informant "loved my Black people, my Garifuna people," which she proclaimed in a voice distinctly louder in volume than that used during the rest of the interview. Her sense of home in the community, she went on to say, had to do with this love and respect for the culture, as well as her increasing ability to plant and prepare "typical" Garifuna food, as well as her learning of the Garifuna language *poco a poco* ("bit by bit"). When she occasionally visited her natal town of El Paraíso, she felt at odds and sad, recalling the violence that had caused her to leave and which I relay in a vignette found in this dissertation's appendix.

A second recuperation member, after being asked about how OFRANEH represented the Garinagu, answered by telling me a story of her own history in Santa Fè, with discussions of her own ethnic and racial background. She had come to Santa Fé from La Moskitia when she was 6 years old, and was now in her mid 30s. After declaring that she considered herself "india" (ladina), she lowered her voice and firmly stated that she also had "Sambo" blood, clarifying that Sambos were a *rama* or branch of the Miskitos (another Afro-Indigenous group on the Caribbean coast of Honduras and Nicaragua). And, like the first woman I interviewed that day, she conveyed that besides her being a "community member" who lived alongside and in the manner of the Garinagu of Santa Fé, that her participation in the recuperation was born of great necessity: Like everyone in Santa Fé, she proclaimed, she was suffering for land, and deeply

worried about her and her family's food security, as well as where future generations might reside.

Both women, then, represented themselves as racially-mixed peoples who identified their African or Black ancestry, proclaimed their long history in Santa Fé, and found further points of intersection with the Garifuna land cause by way of conveying their need of land for material survival, as well as the survival of future generations. This I read as an attempt by the participants to bridge difference, convey belonging and insert their own struggles against displacement and landlessness into the Garifuna land defense movement. This was communicated by narratives that inverted the logics of *blanquiamiento,* which saw them aligning themselves with representations of the Garinagu deployed by OFRANEH and affiliated land defenders in "the field;" but also, by referencing persistent *mestizaje* nationalist rhetoric. This was evident in their referencing of notions of the north coast as a Black place, where Blackness signals to belonging. Making place in Santa Fé and at the recuperation also pivoted on their time spent in, and integration with, the community, and both interviewees at Wani Leè referenced the ways they had assimilated to the specific Garifuna culture since arriving to the coast. This, I propose, might be read as an attempt to further entrench notions of belonging to place tied to race, by way of notions of ethnic autochthony attached to official multiculturalisms: whether by describing the farming and food collection methods they had learned and practiced when they were able to access land, or by giving me a detailed list of all the typical Garifuna foods they could plant, harvest and prepare; these two women discursively constructed their right to place around details of extended and detailed relationships with community and culture, as intrinsically tied to the land (Interviews with Wani Leè 2 and 3 April 24th, 2016). For both women, the particular land-based practices and food production associated with the Garinagu – which I have

argued are a necessary part of the place-making practices at Vallecito as tied to the discourse of Indigeneity - seemed to have become particularly salient. But, beyond OFRANEH-sanctioned performances of the intertwinement of land and culture as witnessed at Vallecito, this might signal an adoption of Garifuna *cosmovisión* ("cosmovision" or world-view) - in particular, the divestment from dominant spatial imaginaries "struck through with race" (Lipsitz, 2011) that might hold the key to a cross-section of land scarce and landless peoples participating in Garifuna land struggles without the risk of privatization that many Garifunas associated with ladino presence on ancestral land.

As was described to me by the recuperation leader and reiterated by various members including the two ladina interviewees, the 70 or so persons from Santa Fé – Garifunas and ladinos - who initiated the Wani Leè recuperation each gained a parcel or *solar* of land as is common in the recuperation process (Interview with OFRANEH 1 April 15th, 2018). These *solares* are located on ancestral land collectively titled to Santa Fé Garifunas in the 1990s, and I was told that in the Garifuna tradition they could be passed down over generations but could never be sold by recuperation members. And at Wani Leè – differently from some other land recuperations in the Bay, like *Laru Beya* ("by the sea shore" in Garifuna) – there was also a strict policy of absolutely no fencing allowed, minus the makeshift fence that had existed along the road-side of the recuperations since before it was initiated (Interviews with Wani Leè 5 and 6 April 18th, 2018). This detail was particularly important to the recuperation leadership. The recuperation leader and others on the ground told me that not only was this the traditional way the Garinagu existed with each other and with the land – "there is no 'mine' in our culture, there is only 'ours'" (Interview with Wani Leè 5 April 18th, 2018) – it also symbolically deconstructed

any notions of individual or "private" ownership that would run contrary to the recuperation's goals.

Recuperation members described to me how, at Wani Leè, membership pivoted on co-operative food production, community service and the pursuit of a common goal to sell excess produce to cover common recuperation costs and needs (Interviews with Wani Leè 1, 2, 3, April 24th, 2016 and 4 & 5 April 18th, 2018). So while overall, Garinagu engaged in the work of *el campo* ("the field") must abide by Eurocentric notions of "appropriate" land use that sees the Lockian logic of "land for those who work it" (Wolford, 2005) govern the way a recuperation is performed, the opposite might be said to be true in the way that land tenure was constructed on-site: this recuperation's insistence on co-operative labour, as well as it symbolic conveyance by way of a lack of fencing, seemed to foster links with non-Garinagu who have been historically mobilized in projects of Garifuna dispossession, vis-à-vis a more distinct emphasis on Garifuna spatial imaginaries and practices (Interviews with Wani Leè 1 April 24th, 2016 & 5 April 18th, 2018).

An OFRANEH affiliate engaged in the work of *el campo* ("the field," meaning the work of staying on the land) shared a very different perspective on ladino involvement in the Garifuna land recuperation movement with me, however (Interviews with OFRANEH 2 April 18th, 2018). As the land defender gestured towards a number of *viviendas* ("houses") at the Laru Beya recuperation, he told me they belonged to ladinos - like many other recuperations in the Region, he continued, Laru Beya was organized to confront settlements or "invasions" of internally displaced and landless ladinos on Garifuna land. While not providing me with extensive details of the exchange that occurred when the recuperation "took place," my contact described how the ladino families vigorously protested Garifuna claims to land, and insisted on their rights instead.

He closed his story by saying that in the end, several ladino families were permitted to maintain their homes and agricultural plots alongside the Garinagu. However, this agreement was reached only after the ladinos in question had acknowledged Laru Beya as the traditional territory of the Garinagu, and dropped all claims and pretenses of ownership. Instead of framing what was emerging at Laru Beya as a ladino and Garifuna coalition that could destabilize dominant hierarchies and geographies of power in Honduras, he proffered that it might do just the opposite: "it might be kind of like an invasion in between the recuperation, but I don't know" he mused as we walked amongst the cassava shrubs and plantain trees of his plot. Perhaps referencing the long history of racial violence that has ensured Garifuna dispossession in Honduras, he shook his head and said "better to include people, and not have any problems" (Interview with OFRANEH 2 April 18th, 2018).

While we video-chatted over Skype in mid-2018, a second OFRANEH affiliate suggested that ladino participation in Garifuna land recuperations re-made rather than deconstructed or inverted racial and spatial hierarchies central to capitalism. While he did not gesture towards the anti-Black violence that sees ladinos included in Garifuna recuperations like the first respondent did, nor did he speak to how recuperation spatial organization could help or hinder the cause, he proposed that ladino participation in the Garifuna land defense movement posed a grave threat to Garifuna land claims, by way of dominant spatial imaginaries that were unlikely to change: *chumagünu* or ladinos held a deeply-ingrained vision of land-as-commodity, he stated, meaning that their participation in Garifuna land defense movements would inevitably lead to the privatization and sale of Garifuna lands that the recuperations aimed to halt and reverse, even when agreements had been made to recognize Garifuna collective ownership (Interview with Vallecito 3 February 17th, 2018). Alliances between landless ladinos and Garifunas like those at

Wani Leè, he then proffered, could certainly be made in times of extreme crisis and need, but were useless as a long-term strategy in the struggle against Garifuna dispossession (Ibid).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have approached Vallecito and Wani Leè as sites where ancestral struggles over land and representation are translated into the present via multi-scalar exchanges and flows in place. Historical struggles over racial and spatial meanings held in the space of possibility are invoked at the recuperations, making them *places* of possibility that depend upon – as well as facilitate - a network of relationships and a raising of "a voice out there in the world" (Interview with Vallecito 1 April 10th, 2016) that foments the Garifuna land struggle in Honduras. While my research shows how recuperation members are able to occupy ancestral lands with the help of OFRANEH's representative politics and legal and material assistance – differently said, with the support of the "office" - it also demonstrates how Garifuna recuperation members on the ground or in the "field" further negotiate a history of multi-scalar struggles over racial and spatial meanings to form partnerships with landless ladinos. As conveyed to me during my time at Wani Leè, ladino-Garifuna coalitions were critical to defying violent grabs of the Santa Fé Garinagu's lands, enabling the recuperation to continue while under significant pressure. This ability to work across significant difference and a deep historical rift might be traced to the influential presence of Garifuna *retornados (*"returnees") in the land defense movement. These men bring racial meanings and experiences from the Global North with them when they return to Honduras, as well as they return to a set of circumstances that begets their participation in global defenses of place. So while Vallecito becomes a place to learn, exchange and practice the skills necessary to live on the land at recuperations across the coast, life in – and expulsion from - New York City

provides the template for their interpretation of landless ladinos as potential allies in the struggle against racialized displacement.

My research findings thus turn our attention to a set of contradictions and possibilities that emerge from Garifuna dispossession, particularly with regard to mobilities and "power geometries" (Massey, 1994) related to racialized and gendered migration and return. In closing, I ask what the increasing return of Garifuna immigrants men from the U.S., and their involvement in the land defense movement, might signify when we consider how land loss has, historically, been primarily understood as a Garifuna women's issue. Displaced and dispossessed by a gradually coalescing local and foreign elite over the centuries, racial neoliberalism and violence continues to impinge upon women's control of land and resources in Honduras, as noted at Wani Leè: when I first visited the recuperation, I encountered a high percentage of women on the land (including Garifuna women and ladinas), but none when I returned. This was during the aftermath of a period of prolonged intimidation by the Mayor of Santa Fé, which had cumulated in an attack on the recuperation by state forces. It was to my horror that, just after leaving the field for the first time, I spoke to friends at the recuperation over Facebook messenger, who recounted how their dwellings had recently been burnt to the ground by national police after a series of threats to recuperation members by members of the Municipal government. Days later, I received a communiqué from Rights Action Canada detailing OFRANEH's report of the incident (OFRANEH, 2016). When I returned to the field in early 2018, recuperation members told me that as a result of the attack, women and children were moved off of the recuperation and returned to the site only for short visits during daylight hours to work agricultural plots or to attend meetings such as the one we were having. In closing, I ask readers to consider how this extends earlier stages of (racialized and gendered) Garifuna dispossession that I have described

in this dissertation - where Garifuna women's access to land was curtailed as they were forced into the domestic sphere.

Works Cited

Anderson, M. (1997). "The significance of Blackness: representations of Garifuna on St. Vincent and Central America, 1700-1900. *Transforming Anthropology*, 6(1/2). Pp.22-35.

Anderson, M. (2007). When afro becomes (like) indigenous: Garifuna and afro-indigenous politics in Honduras. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 12(2), 384-413.

Anderson, M. (2009). *Black and indigenous: Garifuna activism and consumer culture in Honduras*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Brondo, K.V. (2010). When Mestizo becomes (like) Indio - or is it Garifuna?: Multicultural rights and "making place" on Honduras' north coast. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 15(1), 170–194.

Brondo, K.V. (2013). *Land grab: Green neoliberalism, gender, and Garifuna resistance in Honduras.* Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

England, S. (2000). *Creating a global Garifuna nation? The transnationalization of race, class and gender politics in the Garifuna diaspora.* ProQuest Dissertations. UMI: Ann Arbor.

England, S. (2010) Mixed and multiracial in Trinidad and Honduras: Rethinking mixed-race identities in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(2), 195-213.

Escobar, A. (2003). *Displacement, development, and modernity in the Colombian Pacific.* UNESCO. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Gonzalez, N.L.S. (1979). Garifuna settlement in New York: A new frontier. *International Migration Review*, 13(2), 255-26.

Gonzalez, N. L. S. (1988). *Sojourners of the Caribbean: Ethnogenesis and ethnohistory of the Garifuna.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jung, L. (2011). African palm and Afro-Indigenous resistance: Race and dispossession of Garifuna lands on Honduras' northern coast. *College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences Theses and Dissertations.* Paper 84.

Kerssen, T.M. (2013). *Grabbing power: The new struggles for land, food and democracy in northern Honduras.* Oakland: Food First Books.

Lipsitz, G. (2011). *How racism takes place.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Martin, D. G. (2003). 'Place-framing' as place-making: Constituting a neighborhood for organizing and activism. *Annals of the association of American geographer,* 93(3), 730-750.

Mollett, S. (2013). Mapping deception: The politics of mapping Miskito and Garifuna space in Honduras. *Annals of the association of American Geographers,* 103(5), 1227-1241.

Mollett, S. (2015). A modern paradise: Garifuna, land, labor, and displacement-in-place. *Latin American Perspectives,* 41(6), 27-45.

OFRANEH (2016). Presiones territoriales en la Costa Garifuna: fallo a favor de Barra Vieja e intento de desalojo en Santa Fe. https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2016/09/10/presiones-territoriales-en-la-costa-garifuna-fallo-a-favor-de-barra-vieja-e-intento-de-desalojo-en-santa-fe/

Russo, T. (September 18th, 2012). Vallecito resists, Satuye lives! Garifuna resistance to Honduras' Charter Cities. *Upsidedown World.*

Wolford, W. (2005). Agrarian moral economies and neoliberalism in Brazil: Competing worldviews and the state in the struggle for land. *Environment and planning A: economy and space,* 241-261.